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# THE BIRTH OF MOSES IN EGYPT ACCORDING TO THE *BOOK OF JUBILEES* (JUB 47.1-9)

JACQUES T.A.G.M. VAN RUITEN

## 1. *Introduction*

The *Book of Jubilees* consists of a rewriting of the biblical narrative of the book of Genesis: the primeval history and the history of the patriarchs, with a special emphasis on Jacob. For this reason, one of the traditional names of the book is *The Little Genesis*.<sup>1</sup> Despite its emphasis on Genesis, however, the *Book of Jubilees* also deals with the book of Exodus. One can point to the beginning of chapter 1, where the author combines Exodus 19.1 (the arrival of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai) and Exodus 24.18-21 (the ascension by Moses of the mountain to receive the tablets of stone) to describe the scene for the revelation.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the narrative of Exodus 1-14 is represented at the end, in *Jubilees* 46.1-48.19. It is a very condensed rendering, however. Some passages are omitted and other passages are significantly abbreviated, for example the story of the plagues (Exodus 7-12), which the author deals with in just four verses (*Jub* 48.5-8). The passage immediately preceding the story of the plagues (Exod 2.23-7.9), and following the period of Moses in Midian, is also dealt with very briefly (*Jub* 48.1-4). The theophany at the burning bush, the commission of Moses, and

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<sup>1</sup> This name occurs in four different forms ἡ Λεπτὴ Γένεσις (e.g., Epiphanius); ἡ Λεπτογένεσις (e.g., Didymus of Alexandria); τὰ Λεπτὰ Γενέσεως (Syncellus); ἡ Μικρογένεσις (Jerome). All forms probably reflect an original Hebrew form: בְּרֵאשִׁית זוּסָא. Cf. H. Rönsch, *Das Buch der Jubiläen: oder die Kleine Genesis; unter Beifügung des revidirten Textes der in der Ambrosiana aufgefundenen lateinischen Fragmente*, Leipzig 1874 (repr. Amsterdam 1970), 461-8; R.H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis: Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text*, London 1902, xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Exod 19 and 24 are parallel versions of the episode on Mount Sinai, which supplement each other in many ways. *Jub* 1.1-4 may be an example of a text that reflects a version in which elements of both chapters have been combined. According to E. Tov, '4Q364: 4QReworked Pentateuch<sup>b</sup>', in: H.W. Attridge et al., *Qumran Cave 4-VIII: Parabiblical Texts. Part 1* (DJD 13), Oxford 1994, 221-2, the text of 4Q364 (Frg. 14) also shows a combination of elements of both chapters (i.e., Exod 19.17 and Exod 24.12-14).

the revelation of the Name is dealt with in just one phrase ('You know who spoke to you at Mt Sinai'). Although the rewriting in this part of the book is very concise, the author nevertheless takes the opportunity to present his world view. The narratives about Moses in Exodus 3-14 are in fact being rewritten in *Jubilees* as a battle between Mastema and the Angel of God. The world is under the control of the creator God, all-powerful and good, yet He permits the forces of evil to have some influence on mankind. Mastema is the leader of this host of evil powers. The Egyptian magicians are on the side of Mastema, whereas Moses is on the side of the Angel of God.

As far as the first two chapters of the Book of Exodus are concerned, a few passages are omitted altogether (Exod 1.1-5, 13-21; 2.16-22), whereas the text of Exod 1.6-8 is quoted merely as the basis for an extensive addition in the *Book of Jubilees* (*Jub* 46.1-11), which serves mainly as a transition between the Jacob episode and that of Moses. It explains why the prosperous situation for Israel in Egypt changed into a situation of slavery. The only passages that are followed quite extensively are Exod 1.9-12 (cf. *Jub* 46.12-16), which describes the situation of distress for the children of Israel, Exod 2.1-10 (cf. *Jub* 47.1-9), which describes the birth of Moses, and Exod 2.11-15 (cf. *Jub* 47.10-12), which describes the first period of his life until his flight to Midian. In the context of this contribution, I shall restrict myself to *Jubilees* 47.1-9, which can be considered as the rewriting of Exod 2.1-10, the story of Moses' birth.

## 2. Exodus 1.22-2.10

In contemporary exegetical literature, most exegetes assume that Exod 2.1-10 is a literary unit,<sup>3</sup> but a few exegetes consider Exod 1.22-2.10,<sup>4</sup> 1.15-2.10,<sup>5</sup> or 1.8-2.10<sup>6</sup> as a unit. Exod 2.11-15 is regarded as part

<sup>3</sup> E.g., C. Houtman, *Exodus* (COT), Kampen 1986, i, 254-77; J.I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3), Waco, Texas 1987, 13-17; W.H. Schmidt, *Exodus*, vol. i: *Exodus 1-6* (BKAT II.1), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1988, 49-64. According to some, Exod 2.1-10 is part of larger unity, either Exod 2.1-22 (e.g., G. Beer, *Exodus mit einem Beitrag von K. Gallig* [HAT], Tübingen 1939), or 2.1-15 (e.g., F. Michaeli, *Le livre de l'Exode* [CAT], Neuchâtel 1974).

<sup>4</sup> So W.H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18* (AB 2), New York 1998, 142-60.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. I. Willi-Plein, 'Ort und literarische Funktion der Geburtsgeschichte des Mose', *Vetus Testamentum* 41 (1991) 110-18.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, London 1977<sup>2</sup>, 7.

of a larger entity, e.g., Exod 2.11-22 or Exod 2.11-25, whereas Exod 1.22 belongs to Exod 1.(8)15-22. I agree with the majority, and consider Exod 2.1-10 as a unit, although I think that it is only possible to understand this passage in close connection with Exod 1.15-22.<sup>7</sup> The command of Pharaoh to kill every Hebrew male child (Exod 1.15-22) forms the background to the story of the birth of Moses (Exod 2.1-10).<sup>8</sup>

Exodus 2.1-10 can be considered as a kind of a marriage and birth report, which strengthens the unity of the passage. The basic structure is as follows: 1. A man knew<sup>9</sup> / took<sup>10</sup> a woman; 2. The woman conceived; 3. The woman gave birth to a son; 4. The woman or the man named this son; 5. Finally, an explanation of the name is given. Stages 3 and 4 are often taken together: the woman gave birth to a named son. The text of Exodus 2.1-10 can be considered as an extended form of this report: 1. A man from the house of Levi *went and took to wife* a daughter of Levi (2.1); 2. The woman conceived (2.2a); 3. She gave birth to a son (2.2b); 3b. *Interlude in which it is made clear that the son of the biological mother becomes the son of his adoptive mother* (2.2c-10c); 4. The adoptive mother named him Moses (2.10d); 5. Because she said (explanation of the name) (2.10ef).

In comparison with the basic structure of the marriage and birth report, it is striking in the first place that it is said in the beginning that the man 'went', and, secondly, that after the mention of the birth (2.2b), the giving of the name does not follow immediately but

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Childs, *Exodus*, 7; Willi-Plein, 'Ort', 110-18.

<sup>8</sup> The connection between Exod 1.15-22 and Exod 2.1-10 is stressed by the fact that the root ילד ('to give birth to') occurs often in both passages: eleven times in Exod 1.15-22 (1.15, 16, 17 (2x), 18 (2x), 19 (2x), 20, 21), mostly in the form of מילדת ('midwives'), and nine times in Exod 2.1-10 (Exod 2.2, 3, 6 [2x], 7, 8, 9 [2x], 10). The relative independence of Exod 1.15-22 is expressed by the resemblance between the beginning (1.16) and the end (1.22) of the passage.

<sup>9</sup> For ירע in the meaning of 'having intercourse', see *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament (THAT)*, i, Munich etc. 1971, 682-701, esp. 691; *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament (TWAT)*, iii, Stuttgart 1982, 479-512, esp. 494.

<sup>10</sup> לקח means literally 'to take'. Cf. *THAT*, i, 875-9; *TWAT*, iv, 588-94. It can be used in the meaning of 'take to wife', as is the case in Exod 2.1. With the preposition—it is used in Exod 21.10 and other texts, e.g., Gen 4.19; 11.29; 22.19; 25.20 (cf. also Exod 34.16: 'to take a wife for'). Cf. J. Scharbert, 'Ehe und Eheschliessung in der Rechtssprache des Pentateuch und beim Chronisten', in: G. Braulik (ed.), *Studien zum Pentateuch: Walter Kornfeld zum 60. Geburtstag*, Wien 1977, 213-25.

is postponed until the end of the story (2.10d). Moreover, it is not the biological father or mother who gives the child its name, but another, i.e. the adoptive mother of the child, the daughter of Pharaoh. Between the report of the birth and the giving of the name, the text explains how a newborn son becomes an adopted son of a new mother. At the same time, the text makes clear that he was initially brought up by his own mother.

The story of the birth of Moses can also be considered as a tale.<sup>11</sup> The exposition consists of the command by Pharaoh that all Hebrew-born sons are to be executed (1.[15-]22). In Exod 1.16, they are to be killed by the midwives, in Exod 1.22, they are to be thrown into the Nile. Generally speaking, Moses would have had no chance of living. He would have remained without a name. Then the story introduces the first complication. A Levite marriage produces a son (2.1-2b). Because of the death penalty, this son brings crisis. Moses' mother then decides to save her child. She puts the baby into a basket prepared for the river and places it in the grass at the riverbank (Exod 2.3). The mother gives up her child in order to give him a chance of life.<sup>12</sup> The baby's sister watches to determine what happens to the child (Exod 2.4). However, this act by the mother heightens the tension of the story. A female member of the royal house, a person who has no relationship with the children of Israel, finds him (Exod 2.5). The daughter of Pharaoh recognizes him as a Hebrew, a boy condemned to death by the decree of her father. She has the power to condemn the baby to immediate death. This can be considered as the climax of the story. After this point the dénouement starts, because the storyteller develops the account in such a direction, that the princess does not condemn the child to his death. Instead, 'she took pity on him' and cared for him (Exod 2.6). After this act, the sister of Moses approaches the daughter of Pharaoh and the biological mother acts as Moses' nurse (Exod 2.7-9) and the infant is given his name (Exod 2.10).

The story of the birth of Moses is often compared to stories known

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<sup>11</sup> For the genre of a tale, see, e.g., C. Westermann, *Die Verheißungen an die Väter: Studien zur Vätergeschichte* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 116), Göttingen 1976; G.W. Coats, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (FOTL 1), Grand Rapids, MI 1983, 7-8 *et passim*. For the following see also G.W. Coats, '2 Samuel 12.1-7a', *Interpretation* 40 (1986) 170-4.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. A. Brenner, 'Female Social Behavior: Two Descriptive Patterns within the 'Birth of the Hero' Paradigm', *Vetus Testamentum* 36 (1986) 257-73, esp. 269.



to other people in the Ancient Near East. The 'birth of the hero' myth is a well-known and widely used model.<sup>13</sup> The difficult circumstances attending the birth and childhood of a hero are almost universal. One need only point to the Legend of Sargon of Akkad.<sup>14</sup> He was also set afloat on a river in a reed basket, rescued by a water-drawer, nurtured, and became in time a mighty hero and king. The specific modelling in Exod 2.1-10, however, deviates in many respects from the general motif.<sup>15</sup> The descent of the child is not completely anonymous and socially insignificant in that his Levitical origin is mentioned. In Exodus, nothing is written about a clear career at the royal court. After the explanation of the name, the narrative ends abruptly. The report of the birth has priority over the motif of the abandonment. It is not the aim of the author to tell the story of the earliest youth of Moses, he explains how a Levitical child becomes an Egyptian child. Moreover, it seems striking that the actors in Exod 2.1-10 are nearly exclusively women.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. *Blanks in the biblical text*

On several points, the text is open for interpretation or is unclear.<sup>17</sup> Who were this man and woman (Exod 2.1ab)? What is meant by the statement that the man 'went' (Exod 2.1a)? Why does Moses'

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. H. Gressmann, *Mose und seine Zeit*, Göttingen 1913; J. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Princeton 1933; O. Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and Other Writings*, New York 1964; A. Dantes, *The Study of Folklore*, Englewood 1965; D.B. Redford, 'The Literary Motif of the Exposed Child', *Numen* 14 (1967) 209-28; Brenner, 'Female Social Behavior', 257-73; Schmidt, *Exodus*, i, 55-57.

<sup>14</sup> The Legend of Sargon can be found in W. Beyerlin (ed.), *Religionsgeschichtliches Textbuch zum Alten Testament*, Göttingen 1975, 123-4; J.B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, Princeton 1955, 119.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Willi-Plein, 'Ort', 110-18. According to Durham (*Exodus*, 15) the form of the story of the birth of Moses is dictated by the larger theological purpose governing Exod 1 and 2.

<sup>16</sup> With the exception of the action of the father (Exod 2.1ab: 'a man from the house of Levi') who has to play his role in the procreation, and the son (2.10a: 'the child'), only women are the subjects of the verbs used in this passage: Moses' biological mother (2.2a-3e, 9ef); Moses' sister (2.4, 7); Moses' adoptive mother, the daughter of Pharaoh (2.5-6; 8ab, 9a-d, 10b-f). In the genealogy (Exod 6.20; cf. Num 26.57-59) the father is named (Amram), as is his wife (Jochebed).

<sup>17</sup> For the following see S.C. Reif, 'Classical Jewish Commentators on Exodus 2', in: M. Bar-Asher (ed.), *Studies in Hebrew and Jewish Languages Presented to Shelomo Morag*, Jerusalem 1996, \*73-\*112.

birth follow immediately upon the reference to his parents' marriage (Exod 2.2ab), given the fact that he also has a sister (Exod 2.4, 7) and a brother (cf. Exod 4.14)? Why was it possible to hide him for the specific period of three months (Exod 2.2cd)? Why could she no longer hide him (Exod 2.3a)? Why did she use asphalt and pitch? Why did she place the basket in the grass at the riverbank (Exod 2.3e)? How long did it stay there until the daughter of Pharaoh found it? Where did Pharaoh's daughter and her servants go and how and why was the baby fetched (Exod 2.5)? How could Pharaoh's daughter see that Moses was a Hebrew child (Exod 2.6)? It is mentioned that the child grew and that his mother brought him to Pharaoh's daughter (Exod 2.10ab), but how long did Moses' mother nurse him and how old was Moses at that time? Why was it not possible for an Egyptian woman to nurse him (Exod 2.7c)? These are questions which readers in subsequent generations have tried to answer in their commentaries and rewritings.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4. *An overall comparison between Exodus 1.22-2.10 and Jubilees 47.1-9*

In this contribution, I shall thus confine myself to one of the rewritings of Exod 1.22-2.10, i.e., *Jub* 47.1-9. In this part of his narrative, the author of *Jubilees* is concerned with the birth of Moses and the first twenty-one years of his life. The author struggles with some of the questions just mentioned. He tries to answer them with his rewriting.

As far as the overall structure is concerned, the text of Exodus 1.22-2.10 can be considered both as a marriage and birth report and as a tale. It is surprising that *Jubilees* does not follow the structure of the marriage and birth report of the biblical text, as it does elsewhere.<sup>19</sup> As can be seen in the following table, the only element of the basic structure of a marriage and birth report that is taken over is the men-

<sup>18</sup> E.g., D.J. Harrington, 'Birth Narratives in Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities and the Gospels', in: M.P. Horgan (ed.), *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.*, New York 1989, 316-24, esp. 319. For an anthology of the interpretation in rabbinic and mediaeval Jewish literature of Exodus 1.22-2.10, see M.M. Kasher, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation, VII: Exodus*, New York 1967, 35-58. See also A. Rosmarin, *Moses im Lichte der Agada*, New York 1932, 45-59.

<sup>19</sup> For an overview of the structure of the genealogies of *Jubilees* in comparison to the genealogies in Genesis, see J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten, *Primaeval History Interpreted: The Rewriting of Genesis 1-11 in the Book of Jubilees* (JSJSS 66), Leiden 2000, 113-24.

tion that Moses was born. The other elements that are taken over from Exodus are elements that do not belong to the basic structure of the birth report.

*Exodus 2.1-10**Jubilees 47.1-9*

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. A man from the house of Levi went (2.1a)            | 1. Your father came (47.1a) |
| 2. He took to wife a daughter of Levi (2.1b)           | 2. —                        |
| 3. The woman conceived (2.2a)                          | 3. —                        |
| 4. She gave birth to a son (2.2b)                      | 4. You were born (47.1b)    |
| 5. Interlude (2.2c-10c)                                | 5. Interlude (47.2-9)       |
| 6. The adoptive mother named him Moses (2.10d)         | 6. —                        |
| 7. Because she said (explanation of the name) (2.10ef) | 7. —                        |

The story of the birth of Moses can also be considered as a tale. In this respect the narrative structure runs more or less parallel in both versions. However, there are some striking differences, as one can see in the following table.

*Exodus 2.1-10**Jubilees 47.1-9*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Exposition</i> : Pharaoh's command that all Hebrew sons born are to be executed (1.15-22).   | 1. <i>Exposition</i> : return of Moses' father and his birth in a time of distress (47.1).  |
| 2. <i>First complication</i> : A Levite marriage produces a son (2.1-2b).  | 2. <i>First complication</i> : Pharaoh's command that all Hebrew sons born are to be executed (47.2).   |
| 3. <i>Second complication</i> : Moses' mother puts the baby into a basket prepared for the river and places it in the grass at the riverbank (2.3).  | 3. <i>Second complication</i> : Moses' mother puts the baby into a basket prepared for the river and places it in the grass at the riverbank (47.3-4).                          |
| 4. <i>Climax</i> : Pharaoh's daughter recognizes him as a Hebrew (2.5-6c).   | 4. <i>Climax</i> : Pharaoh's daughter finds him (47.5).   |
| 5. <i>Dénouement</i> : The princess 'took pity on him' and cared for him (2.6d). After this act, Moses' sister can go to Pharaoh's daughter, the biological mother acts as Moses' nurse (2.7-9). | 5. <i>Dénouement</i> : The princess 'took pity on him' (47.6). After this act, Moses' sister can go to Pharaoh's daughter, the biological mother acts as Moses' nurse (47.7-8). |
| 6. <i>Conclusion</i> : Moses was brought to Pharaoh's daughter and is given his name (2.10).   | 6. <i>Conclusion</i> : Moses educated by his father, and brought to the royal court (47.9).   |



The arrival of Moses' father and Moses' birth bring about a complication in the narrative of Exodus, because he was born in a situation of death penalty for every male who was born. In *Jubilees*, however, this is explicitly mentioned as part of the exposition. The complication there starts with the decree of the death penalty. As far as the conclusion is concerned, the name-giving is left out by *Jubilees*, whereas his education by his father and his bringing to the royal court is given more importance.

Although the narrative structure is parallel in both texts, there are only a few *verbatim quotations*. However, many *variations* strengthen the similarity between both texts. The variations are partly caused by the fact that the story of Exod 1-2 is told in *Jubilees* to Moses by the angel of the presence. Several elements in the story of Exodus which are told in the third person singular are put in the second person singular in *Jubilees* (*Jub* 47.1a, b, 3c, 4a, d, 5c, 6b, 7a, 8b, d, 9a, b). In addition to the verbatim quotations and the variations, there are many *additions* and some *omissions*.

In the following synoptic overview, I have tried to present a classification of the similarities and dissimilarities between Exodus 1.22-2.10 and *Jubilees* 47.1-9. I have used small caps and square brackets to highlight those elements of Exodus which do not occur in *Jubilees*, and vice versa, i.e., the omissions and additions. Small caps in one text correspond to square brackets in the other. I have used normal script for the corresponding elements between both texts, i.e. the verbatim quotations of one or more words from the source text in *Jubilees*. I have used italics to indicate the variations between Exodus and *Jubilees*, other than additions or omissions. Sometimes there is a rearrangement of words and sentences. I have underlined those elements.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Quotations from the biblical text follow the Revised Standard Version, with slight modifications, whereas quotations from *Jubilees* are according to J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, vol. ii (CSCO 511; Scriptorum Aethiopicum 88), Louvain 1989. *Jub* 47.1-9 is nearly completely preserved in Latin. Both the Latin and the Ethiopic translations go back to a Greek translation of the Hebrew original. Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, vol. ii, vi-xxxi; K. Berger, *Das Buch der Jubiläen* (JSHRZ II.3), Gütersloh 1981, 285-94. The edition of the Latin text of *Jub* 47.1-9 can be found in J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees*, vol. i (CSCO 510; Scriptorum Aethiopicum 87), Louvain 1989, 298. The text-critical value of the Latin text of *Jub* 47.1-9 is discussed in the notes to the translation of the Ethiopic text of *Jub* 47.1-9 in VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, ii, 305-8.

## Exodus 1.22-2.10

## Jubilees 47.1-9

1.22a Pharaoh [ ] *commanded* ALL HIS PEOPLE  
[ ],

b *'Every son that is born to the Hebrews you  
shall throw into the Nile,*

c BUT YOU SHALL LET EVERY DAUGHTER  
LIVE'.  
[ ]

2.1a *A man from the house of Levi went*  
[ ]

b AND TOOK TO WIFE A DAUGHTER OF  
LEVI.

2a THE WOMAN CONCEIVED  
b and bore a son; [ ]

[cf. Exod 1.22]

c AND WHEN SHE SAW THAT HE WAS A  
GOODLY CHILD,  
d she hid him for three months.

3a *When she could hide him no longer*  
b she took for him a box MADE OF  
BULRUSHES,  
c covered it with asphalt and pitch;  
d and she put the child in it [ ]  
e and put it in the grass at the  
riverbank.

[ ]

4a And [ ] his sister stood at a distance, to  
know what would be done to him.

5a [ ] The daughter of Pharaoh went  
out to bathe at the river,

b AND HER MAIDENS WALKED BESIDE THE  
RIVER;

c SHE SAW THE BOX IN THE GRASS

[cf. Jub 47.2a-3b]

1a DURING THE SEVENTH WEEK, IN  
THE SEVENTH YEAR, IN THE FORTY-  
SEVENTH JUBILEE,  
*your father came* FROM THE LAND OF  
CANAAN.  
[ ]

b *You were born* DURING THE FOURTH  
MONTH, IN ITS SIXTH YEAR, IN THE  
FORTY EIGHTH JUBILEE,  
c WHICH WAS THE TIME OF DISTRESS  
FOR THE ISRAELITES.

2a Pharaoh, the king of Egypt had  
given orders [ ] REGARDING THEM  
b that they were to throw their sons—every  
male who was born—into the river. [ ]

3a THEY CONTINUED THROWING (THEM  
IN) FOR SEVEN MONTHS  
b UNTIL THE TIME WHEN YOU WERE  
BORN.  
[ ]

c *Your mother hid you* for three  
months.

d *Then they told about her.*

4a She made a box [ ] for you,

b covered it with pitch and asphalt,

c and put it in the grass at the  
riverbank.

d She put you in it FOR SEVEN DAYS.

e YOUR MOTHER WOULD COME AT  
NIGHT

f AND NURSE YOU,

g and DURING THE DAY *your sister*  
MIRIAM would protect you from the  
birds.

5a AT THAT TIME TARMUTH, the  
daughter of Pharaoh, went out to  
bathe in the river  
[ ]

## Exodus 1.22-2.10

## Jubilees 47.1-9

- d and *sent* her *maid* to bring it.  
[ ]
- 6a WHEN SHE OPENED IT  
b SHE SAW THE CHILD;  
c and lo, the babe was crying.  
[ ]
- d She took pity on *him*  
e AND SAID:  
f 'THIS IS ONE OF THE HEBREWS'  
CHILDREN'.
- 7a Then *his* sister said to *the daughter of Pharaoh*:  
b 'Shall I go  
c and call for you *a woman, a nurse*, from  
the Hebrew women,  
*to nurse the child* for you?'  
8a *The daughter of Pharaoh* said to her:  
b 'Go'.  
c *The girl* went  
d and called *the child's* mother.
- 9a AND PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER SAID TO  
HER:  
b 'TAKE THIS CHILD AWAY,  
c AND NURSE HIM FOR ME,  
d *I will give you* YOUR wages'.  
e THE WOMAN TOOK THE CHILD  
f *and she nursed him.*  
[ ]
- 10a *And the child* grew,  
b *and she brought him* to Pharaoh's  
daughter,  
c *and he* became her son;  
d AND SHE NAMED HIM MOSES,  
e FOR SHE SAID:  
f 'BECAUSE I DREW HIM OUT OF THE  
WATER'.  
[ ]
- b and heard you crying.  
c She *told* her *slaves*<sup>21</sup> to bring you,  
d SO THEY BROUGHT YOU TO HER.  
[ ]
- 6a SHE TOOK YOU OUT OF THE BOX  
b and took pity on *you*.  
[ ]
- 7a Then *your* sister said to *her*:  
b 'Shall I go  
c and call for you *one* of the Hebrew  
women who will care for  
d and nurse this infant for you?'  
e [She said to her:  
f 'Go'.]<sup>22</sup>  
8a She went  
b and called *your* mother JOCHEBED.  
[ ]
- c She gave her wages  
[ ]  
d *and she took care of you.*  
9a AFTERWARDS,  
*when you had grown up,*  
*you were brought* to Pharaoh's  
daughter  
b *and you* became her son.  
[ ]
- c YOUR FATHER AMRAM TAUGHT  
YOU (THE ART OF) WRITING.  
d AFTER YOU HAD COMPLETED  
THREE WEEKS (= 21 YEARS),  
e HE BROUGHT YOU INTO THE  
ROYAL COURT.

<sup>21</sup> Most of the Ethiopic manuscripts read 'Hebrew women', while Latin has 'slave'. For text-critical reasons, most translations opt for 'slaves'. Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, ii, 306.

<sup>22</sup> With the exception of one manuscript, these words from Exod 2.8 have fallen from the Ethiopic manuscripts. Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, ii, 307.

### 5. *An analysis of the rewriting of Exodus 1.22-2.10 in Jubilees 47.1-9*

#### a. *Dating the events*

The first difference between *Jubilees* and Exodus that strikes the eye is the dating of the events. The author of *Jubilees* attaches great significance to a chronological system within which he frames his rewriting.<sup>23</sup> He puts the biblical narratives in a continuous chronological system, from the creation of the world until the entrance into the promised land, which took place 2450 years after the creation. This system is characterised by its heptadic arrangement: years, weeks of years, and jubilees of years. The history is divided into periods of jubilees. Each jubilee consists of seven weeks of years, i.e. seven times seven years. Moses' father arrived in Egypt in the 7th year of the 7th year-week of the 47th jubilee (cf. *Jub* 47.1a), which is *a.m.* (*anno mundi*) 2303. Moses was born in the 4th month of the 6th year-week of the 48th jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2330. Between the arrival of Amram and the birth of Moses is a period of 27 years. Moreover, Moses remained 21 years in his parental house (*Jub* 47.9d: 'three weeks'). Later it is said that he remained 21 years in the royal court (*Jub* 47.10a). So Moses was 42 years when he ran away and arrived in Midian. This was during the 6th year of the 3rd year-week of the 49th jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2372 (cf. *Jub* 48.1). He lived for another 36 years in Midian, and then returned to Egypt in the 2nd year of the 2nd year-week of the 50 jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2410 (cf. *Jub* 48.1).

#### b. *Naming the characters*

A second difference is the naming of the characters. Exodus speaks about 'a man from the house of Levi' and 'a daughter of Levi' (Exod 2.1), about 'his sister' (Exod 2.4, 7a), the daughter of Pharaoh (Exod 2.5-10), and of 'Moses' (Exod 2.10). All the characters are anonymous, with the exception of Moses who is given his name at the end of the story. By contrast, *Jubilees* names all characters with the exception of Moses. The narrative starts with 'your father' (*Jub* 47.1a), who had already been named 'Amram' in the preceding chapter (cf. *Jub* 46.9). Moses' mother is called by her name 'Jochebed' (cf. *Jub* 47.8), his sister

<sup>23</sup> Cf. J.C. VanderKam, 'Das chronologische Konzept des Jubiläenbuches', *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 107 (1995) 80-100.

by her name 'Miriam' (*Jub* 47.4g), and the daughter of Pharaoh by her name 'Tarmuth' (*Jub* 47.5a).

Although Amram, Jochebed and Miriam are not called by their names in Exodus 1-2, their names are in accordance with the biblical data. In the genealogy of Exod 6.14-25, it is said that Amram married his aunt Jochebed (Exod 6.20: 'Amram took to wife Jochebed his father's sister'), and that she bore to him Aaron and Moses. In this genealogy, it is made clear that Amram is from the house of Levi. He is one of the sons of Kohath (Exod 6.18), who is one of the sons of Levi (Exod 6.16). This shows that the author of *Jubilees* uses also passages from the book of Exodus that he skips over in his rewriting. As we will see later on, the author of *Jubilees* could not stress the fact that Amram married his aunt.<sup>24</sup> In the genealogy of Num 26.57-59, it is mentioned that Jochebed, who was born to Levi in Egypt, bore to Amram not only Aaron and Moses, but also Miriam their sister. In Exod 15.20, Miriam is called the sister of Aaron. In contrast with the biblical books, Aaron does not occur at all in the Book of *Jubilees*. This is probably due to the choice of Levi as the prototypical priest rather than Aaron who carries that role in Exodus-Numbers.<sup>25</sup> The name 'Tarmuth', the name of Pharaoh's daughter, is not found in biblical literature. Flavius Josephus calls her almost identical 'Thermouthis' (*Jewish Antiquities* 2.24). In rabbinic literature, she is called 'Bithiah' (cf. *b. Meg* 13a; *Lev r* 1.3).

### c. *The stay of Amram in Canaan*

In *Jub* 47.1, the author mentions that Moses' father Amram comes 'from the land of Canaan'. This is nowhere stated in the biblical literature. In the preceding chapter of the *Book of Jubilees*, it had been explained how Moses' father had left Egypt and had gone on a journey to Canaan (cf. *Jub* 46.10). This was connected with the burial of the bones of all Jacob's sons, except those of Joseph, in Hebron (*Jub* 46.9-10). The transfer of these bones is linked up with a battle between the king of Egypt and the king of Canaan:

<sup>24</sup> Cf. notes 32 and 33.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha), Sheffield 2001, 142. According to Ravid, in omitting any reference to Aaron in the *Book of Jubilees*, the author intended to undermine the legality of the Zadokites' right to act as High Priests. See L. Ravid, 'Purity and Impurity in the Book of Jubilees', *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 13 (2002) 61-86, esp. 84.



(5) Before he (= Joseph) died he ordered the Israelites to take his bones along at the time when they would leave the land of Egypt. (6) He made them swear about his bones because he knew that the Egyptians would not again bring him out and bury him on the day in the land of Canaan, since Makamaron, the king of Canaan—while he was living in the land of Asur—fought in the valley with the king of Egypt and killed him there. He pursued the Egyptians as far as the gates of Ermon. (7) He was unable to enter because another new king ruled Egypt. He was stronger than he, so he returned to the land of Canaan and the gates of Egypt were closed with no one leaving or entering Egypt (8) Joseph died in the forty-sixth jubilee, in the sixth week, during its second year. He was buried in the land of Egypt, and all his brothers died after him. (9) Then the king of Egypt went out to fight with the king of Canaan in the forty-seventh jubilee, in the second week, during its second year. The Israelites brought out all the bones of Jacob's sons except Joseph's bones. They buried them in the field, in the double cave in the mountain. (10) Many returned to Egypt but a few of them remained on the mountain of Hebron. Your father Amram remained with them. (*Jub* 46.6-10)

It is difficult to interpret the events and characters mentioned in *Jub* 46.6-10. The kings of Canaan and Egypt might reflect the conflicts between the Seleucides who controlled Palestine and the Ptolemies in Egypt.<sup>26</sup> The description of this conflict, which has no parallel in the biblical text, seems to serve a few goals. In the first place, it refers to a saying of Joseph at the end of the book of Genesis:

And Joseph said to his brothers: 'I am about to die; but God will visit you, and bring you up out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob'. Then Joseph took an oath of the sons of Israel, saying: 'God will visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here' (Gen 50.24-25).

The text does not make clear why Joseph did not ask for his bones to be taken up to Canaan right away, as Jacob had asked (cf. Gen 47.29-30). The author of *Jubilees* suggests an answer to this question. A war had caused the border between Egypt and Canaan to be closed. It is for this reason that his bones could not be transported immediately to Canaan. Therefore, Joseph asked his brothers to make sure that he would be buried in Canaan.<sup>27</sup> In the biblical text, this request is executed during the exodus from Egypt (cf. Exod 13.19).

In the second place, according to the author of *Jubilees*, the victory

<sup>26</sup> VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 81-2. Cf. Charles, *Book of Jubilees*, 245-6.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. J.L. Kugel, *The Bible As It Was*, Cambridge, Mass. 1997, 282-3.

of the king of Egypt enabled the Israelites to transport the bones of the sons of Jacob outside Egypt in order to bury them in Canaan, 'in the field, in the double cave in the mountain' (*Jub* 46.9), which is 'the mountain of Hebron' (*Jub* 46.10). According to the biblical data, the bones of Joseph were to be kept in Egypt. However, they were taken along by Moses and the Israelites at the time of the exodus from Egypt (Exod 13.19). Nowhere in the biblical literature does it state that the bones of the brothers of Joseph were also to be buried in Canaan. According to the author of *Jubilees*, this must have been obvious. He makes it possible by using a tradition that is not found in the Bible and that connects the transport of the bones with a war between Egypt and Canaan.

The same tradition can be found in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. There, too, it is said that the bones of all the patriarchs were buried in Hebron.<sup>28</sup> In the case of Simeon and Benjamin, a war is also mentioned. In the *Testament of Simeon* 8.2, it is said that the bones of Simeon were carried by his sons 'in secret' up to Hebron 'during a war with Egypt'. The sons of Benjamin also carried the bones of their father in secret to Hebron, 'because of a war with Canaan' (*Test. Benj.* 12.3). They returned afterwards: 'They returned from the land of Canaan and resided in Egypt until the day of the departure from Egypt' (*Test. Benj.* 12.4). It is not clear whether, according to the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, the bones of all patriarchs, with the exception of Joseph, were transported at the same time to Hebron, as *Jubilees* puts it, or at different times. Whereas with regard to Simeon and Benjamin the text speaks about a war, with regard to Gad, the text speaks about a period of five years after his death before his bones were transported (*Test. Gad* 8.4), whereas in the case of Levi, Zebulon, and Dan, it is said that they were transported 'later' (cf. *Test. Levi* 19.5; *Test. Zebulon* 10.6; *Test. Dan* 7.2).<sup>29</sup>

The tradition that the bones of Joseph's brothers were brought from Egypt to Canaan before the bones of Joseph is also found in Flavius Josephus, although no war is mentioned:

His brothers also died in Egypt, after a rich and prosperous life. Their bodies were taken later by their descendants and buried in Hebron. The

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Test. Reuben* 7.1-2; *Test. Simeon* 8.1-2; *Test. Levi* 19.5; *Test. Judah* 26.4; *Test. Zebulon* 10.6; *Test. Dan* 7.2; *Test. Naftali* 9.1-2; *Test. Gad* 8.3-4; *Test. Asher* 8.1; *Test. Benjamin* 12.1-4.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Charles, *Book of Jubilees*, 245.

bones of Joseph were carried away to Canaan much later, when the Hebrews moved away from Egypt (*Jew. Ant.* 2.199-200).

Acts also speaks about the transport of the bones, but does not mention a war:

And Jacob went down into Egypt. And he died, himself and our fathers, and they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem (Acts 7.15-16).<sup>30</sup>

According to the author of *Jubilees*, the burial of the bones of the patriarchs enabled Amram, one of the descendants of Levi, to go to Canaan in the company of many other Israelites. After the burial of the patriarchs, most of the Israelites returned to Egypt. A few of them, however, remained on the mountain of Hebron, among whom was Moses' father Amram. The reason why these few stayed in Canaan is not made clear. It may possibly have been because after some time the king of Canaan prevailed over Egypt: 'The king of Canaan conquered the king of Egypt and closed the gates of Egypt' (*Jub* 46.11). It is not said for how long the gates of Egypt remained closed. In any case, Amram stayed for 40 years in Canaan. He arrived in Canaan in the 2nd year of the 2nd year-week of the 47th jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2263 (cf. *Jub* 46.9), and he arrived back in Egypt in the 7th year of the 7th year-week of the 47th jubilee, which is *a.m.* 2303 (cf. *Jub* 47.1a).

The additions about a war between Egypt and Canaan were possibly also motivated by the wish to explain why the people of Egypt were afraid of the people of Israel. The king of Egypt conceived an evil plan against Israel because he was afraid of them (cf. *Jub* 46.12). When war came they would also fight against Egypt and unite with the enemy, i.e. the king of Canaan, because their minds were oriented towards Canaan (cf. *Jub* 46.13). The slavery imposed on them was meant to stop them multiplying and to make them weaker.

#### d. *Marriage report*

The marriage report (Exod 2.1b: 'He took to wife a daughter of Levi') and the reference to the subsequent intercourse (Exod 2.2a:

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<sup>30</sup> Likewise, in rabbinic literature it is said that the bones not only of Joseph but also of his brothers were eventually brought for burial in Hebron. Cf. *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, Beshallah, Introduction; *Mekhilta de Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai* 14; *Gen r* 100.11.

‘The woman conceived’) is omitted in *Jubilees*. The narrative passes on directly from ‘your father came’ to ‘you were born’. There is of course a period of 27 years between Amram’s return (*a.m.* 2303) and Moses’ birth (*a.m.* 2330). Since *Jub* 47.4g (cf. Exod 2.4) presupposes the birth of a sister prior to Moses’ birth, the marriage between Amram and Jochebed must have taken place at least some years before Moses’ birth. Since Jochebed was born in Egypt (cf. Num 26.59), and it is not said that she went with Amram to Canaan, nor that she came back with him to Egypt, it seems most probable that the marriage took place in Egypt between *a.m.* 2303 and some years before *a.m.* 2330.

The omission of the marriage report is quite unusual because it is an important issue for the author of *Jubilees*.<sup>31</sup> He even adds a marriage into reports of events where the biblical text does not have a marriage report. The author is very interested in genealogical affairs. The reason for the omission may have been that Amram, grandson of Levi, married Jochebed, daughter of Levi, i.e., he married his aunt (cf. Exod 6.20). According to Halpern-Amaru, the relationship between Amram and Jochebed is too well documented in the Bible to rework it into another kind of relationship.<sup>32</sup> This might otherwise have been preferable inasmuch as a marriage between an aunt and a nephew is not permitted according to Levitical law (Lev 20.19: ‘You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister or of your father’s sister, for that is to make naked one’s near kin; they shall bear their iniquity’).<sup>33</sup> The author of *Jubilees* was indeed unwilling to confirm that an impure marriage had produced Moses. Therefore, he just omitted the marriage report between Amram and Jochebed. According to rabbinic literature, before Sinai this Levitical law was only concerned with maternal relationships. In their eyes, Levi had married two different women, one of whom was the mother of Kohath, and the other of Jochebed (cf. *b. Sota* 58b).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. note 19.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. B. Halpern-Amaru, *The Empowerment of Women in the Book of Jubilees* (JSJSS 60), Leiden 1999, 122-4.

<sup>33</sup> The *Jubilees* genealogies avoid this kind of relationship between husband and wife also elsewhere. Cf. Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment*, 123.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Halpern-Amaru, *ibid.*

e. *Three months of hiding*

The author of *Jubilees* also omits the phrase: 'And when she saw that he was a goodly child' (Exod 2.2c).<sup>35</sup> The subsequent mention of a period of hiding, i.e., three months (Exod 2.2d), has produced a tradition in aggadic literature about a premature birth of Moses, i.e., in the sixth or seventh month of the pregnancy of Jochebed.<sup>36</sup> There is another example of this in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, on Exod 2.2: 'The woman conceived and bore a son *at the end of six months*. When she saw he was *viable*, she hid him for three months, *which gives a total of nine*'. Also in the *Mekhilta* can be read: 'The Egyptians counted nine months for her, but she bore *in six months*'.<sup>37</sup> The clue to this tradition is that it is written in Exod 2.2 that Jochebed hid Moses for three months. This would make sense only if the Egyptians expected the baby three months earlier than the actual birth.

In another, probably later, tradition it is said that Moses was born

<sup>35</sup> I do not know the reason for the omission. Ezekiel the Tragedian (*Exagoge* 14) and Flavius Josephus (*Jew. Ant.* 2.218) also omit the phrase, although the excellence of Moses is revealed to his father in a dream (*Jew. Ant.* 2.210-217). The word טוב can be applied to moral qualities as well as to physical appearance. The Septuagint translates ἀστεῖον ('fine', 'handsome') which can refer to physical qualities. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* translated with 'viable' (בר קיימא). Moses' mother sees that her son is healthy despite his premature birth (see below). Therefore she tries to keep him. Rabbinic literature tries to explain the significance of the description: 'The woman conceived and bore a son and she saw that he was fine. R. Meir taught: His name was Tob. R. Joshua: His name was Tobiah ("The Lord is good"). R. Judah: He was worthy of the prophecy. The others say: he was born circumcised' (*Exod r* 1.20; cf. *b. Sotah* 12a). Some rabbis connected it with the beginning of Genesis: 'When Moses was born the house was filled with light. For here it is written: "She saw him, that he was good", and elsewhere we read that "God saw the light, that is was good" (Gen 1.4)'. Cf. Rosmarin, *Moses*, 50; Kashner, *Encyclopedia*, 39-40; G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (SPB 4), Leiden 1973, 184-5; A. Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (JSSM 15), Manchester 1991, 67.

<sup>36</sup> P. van der Horst, 'Seven Month's Children in Jewish and Christian Literature from Antiquity', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 54 (1978) 346-60, esp. 234-5 (reprint in Id., *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* [NTOA 14], Göttingen 1990, 233-47). Cf. also L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, v, 397 note 44; E.B. Levine, 'Parallels to Exodus of Pseudo-Jonathan and Neophyti I', in: A. Diez Macho (ed.), *Neophyti I*, iii, Madrid-Barcelona 1971, 424; R. Bloch, 'Moïse dans la tradition rabbinique', in: H. Cazelles et al. (eds), *Moïse, l'homme de l'alliance*, Paris 1955, 102-18; D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, London 1956, 7; J. Heinemann, '210 Years of Egyptian Exile', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 22 (1971) 19-30; M. Abraham, *Légendes juives apocryphes sur la vie de Moïse*, Paris 1925, 49.

<sup>37</sup> J.N. Epstein and E. Z. Melamed, *Mekhilta de Rabbi Shim on bar Yohai*, Jerusalem 1955, 6, 17.



six months after the remarriage of Amram and Jochebed. After the decree of Pharaoh to throw all newborn Hebrew boys into the river, Amram divorced Jochebed, who was at that moment already three months pregnant (cf. *Exod r* 1.13, 20). However, Miriam rebuked her father, and after this he remarried immediately. The Egyptians considered the return of Jochebed as the beginning of the pregnancy.<sup>38</sup>

*Jubilees* does not explicitly mention either of these traditions with regard to the birth of Moses. However, what should one think of the addition in *Jub* 47.3ab: 'They continued throwing the Hebrew sons into the river for seven months, until the time when you were born'? This seems to imply that there is a relationship, whatever it may be, between the commandment of Pharaoh to kill every male who was born, and the expectation of the birth of Moses.<sup>39</sup> The rearrangement of the decree and the conception in *Jubilees* not only clears Amram and Jochebed of the accusation that they had intercourse in a time when the decree was already proclaimed, it also makes a connection between the decree and the birth of Moses. It is possible that, according to the author of *Jubilees*, the decree was issued at the conception of Moses. In this case, too, 'seven months' then implies that Moses was born too early.

f. *Moses at the riverside* (*Exodus* 2.3-10 // *Jub* 47.3d-9)

In the continuation of the narrative, the author of *Jubilees* follows more or less the storyline of Exodus. There are a few additions, some omissions and several variations, as can be seen in the synoptic overview.

The story in *Exod* 2.3a about the end of Moses' period of hiding merely reads: 'when she could hide him no longer'. It gives no reason why she could hide him no longer. *Jub* 47.3d has a variation on the biblical text and reports that after she hid the infant for three months, they, i.e. unidentified informers, told on her. It gives a reason why Moses' mother could no longer hide him. The Egyptians were tracing her. In a certain way, it gives her an excuse. This variation matches other aggadic elaboration, for example that in *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*:

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Rosmarin, *Moses*, 45-6.

<sup>39</sup> Flavius Josephus mentions the fact that a priest reports to the king that in the near future a child will be born among the Israelites who will, when he has grown up, end the dominion of the Egyptians, and who will bring the Israelites to power (*Jew. Ant.* 2.205). However, this started before the conception of Moses.

'It was no longer possible for her to hide him, because the Egyptians had noticed her' (*Tg Psj* Exod 2.3).<sup>40</sup>

Exodus continues with the report that Moses' mother gets herself a box made of bulrushes, and covered it with asphalt and pitch. In *Jubilees*, the mother makes the box herself, and the material is not specified. The materials asphalt and pitch are reversed in *Jubilees*. In Exodus, the mother first puts the child in the box, and then leaves the box on the riverbank. In *Jubilees*, the mother first puts the box on the riverbank, and then puts the child in it. It indicates perhaps something of the special care and tenderness Moses receives, which we find also in the continuation of the text.

Exodus is not explicit about how long the basket stayed there until the daughter of Pharaoh found it, nor does it state what happened with the baby before it was found. The biblical text only reads that 'his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him' (Exod 2.4). *Jubilees*, however, is more specific. In line with its stress on the number seven, it relates that Moses stayed in his basket for seven days. Moreover, he was taken special care of by his mother and his sister. At night, his mother would come to nurse him, whereas during the day his sister kept an eye on him. Unlike the biblical text, according to which Moses' sister stood some distance away (Exod 2.4), Miriam did not watch at a distance;<sup>41</sup> she protected him from the birds.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> So also in *b. Sotah* 12a; *Exod r* 1.20; *Song of Songs r* 2.15.2. See also Ezekiel the Tragedian: 'When she could no longer escape detection' (*Exagoge* 15); cf. Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1.9-10.

<sup>41</sup> See also Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagoge* 18: 'My sister Mariam stood guard nearby'. See also Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1.12.

<sup>42</sup> According to Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment*, 123 note 52, the reference to the birds appears to be a subtle indicator of Mastema for its recalls the young Abram combating the work of Mastema in Chaldea (*Jub* 11.11-13, 18-21). It is true that apart from the reference to the Prince of Mastema in Abraham's words to Jacob, he occurs after the binding of Isaac only in the Exodus story. With regard to Abram, the Prince of Mastema sent crows and birds so that they might eat the seed which was being sown in the earth. In this way, he reduced the inhabitants of Babylon to poverty (*Jub* 11.9-13). Then the birth of Abram is recounted, and the mention that his father taught him writing (*Jub* 11.14-17). As a young boy, Abram protected the seed (*Jub* 11.18-22). In the story about the binding of Isaac, Prince Mastema questioned the nature of Abraham's faithfulness, and suggested that he should be tested by offering his son (*Jub* 17.16). With regard to Moses, his birth and his education by his father is recounted (*Jub* 47.1-9). However, it is his sister who protected Moses from the birds. Later on, the Prince of Mastema wanted to kill Moses and save the Egyptians (*Jub* 48.3-4), and he empowered the magicians (*Jub* 48.9).

The princess comes to the Nile to bathe. The narrative is slightly changed in *Jubilees* at this point. The biblical text mentions that the princess was accompanied by her maidens. When she saw the box, she sent her maid to bring the box. Only after she had opened the box does she see the child and hear him crying (cf. Exod 2.5-6c). In *Jubilees* it is not said that Pharaoh's daughter was accompanied by her maidens, although they are presupposed. Exodus uses four verbs before arriving at the crying of the child ('she saw', 'she sent', 'she opened', 'she saw', and only then she heard the child crying). In *Jubilees*, it is said immediately that she heard Moses crying (*Jub* 47.5b). This is probably what arouses her compassion. Thereafter, she ordered her slaves to bring Moses to her, and they did so. Then she took Moses out of the box (*Jub* 47.5-6).

When the princess saw the baby, she recognized him as a Hebrew child, in the biblical text (Exod 2.6f). The text does not explain how she knows this. This might be the reason for the omission of this identification in *Jubilees*.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, there is no direct conversation between Moses' mother and Pharaoh's daughter in *Jubilees*. The text simply says that the princess gave wages to Moses' mother, and that she took care of him (*Jub* 47.8ab).

In Exodus, Moses is brought by his mother to the royal palace. It is not said in the biblical text how long his mother took care of him (Exod 2.9e-10b: 'The woman took the child, she nursed him, the child grew, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter'). In *Jubilees*, it is said twice that Moses was brought to Pharaoh's daughter, without the mother being mentioned in this respect. The first time an indefinite formulation is used: 'Afterwards, when you had grown up, *you were brought* to the Pharaoh's daughter'.<sup>44</sup> Shortly after this, the father is named explicitly as the one who brought Moses to the court: 'He (= your father Amram) brought you into the royal court' (*Jub* 47.9e). Moreover, the text makes clear at what age Moses went to Pharaoh's daughter. He was 21 years old (*Jub* 47.9d: 'after you had completed three weeks'). This makes clear that, according to *Jubilees*, Moses got

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<sup>43</sup> In rabbinic literature, it is said that she saw that he was circumcised (*b. Sotah* 12a). According to others, an angel told her that Moses was a Hebrew son (*b. Sotah* 12b).

<sup>44</sup> In fact a plural form of the verb is used: 'they brought you'. This functions as an indefinite plural. Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, ii, 307.

his earliest education not in the palace of Pharaoh, but in his own house, by his own father (*Jub* 47.9c: 'your father Amram taught you the art of writing'). This resolves a problem that the biblical text does not answer, namely how does Moses become aware that he was one of the Israelites?<sup>45</sup> But there is something more. He could use his skill to write the *Book of Jubilees*.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the notion that Moses' father Amram taught him the art of writing seems to be at odds with a tradition that reports on Moses' education in Egyptian wisdom.<sup>47</sup> However, it is consistent in the *Book of Jubilees*, and it puts Moses on one line with all the patriarchs.

The art of writing is an important issue in the *Book of Jubilees*. Fathers teach their sons the art of writing (cf. *Jub* 8.2; 11.16; 47.9; cf. 19.14). In addition, it was Enoch who was the first on earth to learn the art of writing, instruction, and wisdom (*Jub* 4.17). Abraham learned to write from his father (*Jub* 11.16), although it was the Angel of the Presence who taught him Hebrew (*Jub* 12.25-27). When Jacob and his brother grew up 'Jacob learned the art of writing, but Esau did not learn it' (*Jub* 19.14).

The art of writing and reading is often connected with *halakhic* instruction of one type or another that is written down by the fathers in a book (*Jub* 4.17; 7.38-39; 10.13-14; 10.17; 12.27; 21.10; 39.6-7; 45.16) and handed down to their sons. In this way, the author of *Jubilees* creates a chain of tradition which is quite distinctive: Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Abram, Isaac, Jacob, (Joseph), Levi. In *Jub* 19.24, the chain of tradition is traced back to Adam: Adam, Seth, Enos, Malaleel, Enoch, Noah, Shem.<sup>48</sup> It is interesting to note that some links in the chain have been omitted. I would point to the generations between Shem and Abram (Arpachsad, Kainan, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Ragew, Serug, Nahor, Terah), which the author of *Jubilees*

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Jacobson, *Exagoge*, 78. Ezekiel the Tragedian recounts that it was his mother who told Moses about his descent: 'My mother brought me to the princess' palace, after telling me all about my lineage and God's gifts' (*Exagoge* 33-35).

<sup>46</sup> VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 118-20.

<sup>47</sup> E.g., Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagoge* 37; Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 1.20-24; Acts 7.22. Cf. Berger, *Jubiläen*, p. 539. See also the article by A. Hilhorst in this collection.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. K. Müller, 'Die hebräische Sprache der Halacha als Textur der Schöpfung: Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis von Tora und Halacha im Buch der Jubiläen', in: H. Merklein, K. Müller, and G. Stemberger (eds), *Bibel in jüdischer und christlicher Tradition* (BBB 38), Frankfurt 1993, 157-76, esp. 161 note 6.

sees as being erratic, troubled generations.<sup>49</sup> This could be seen in conjunction with the fact that during these generations, the earth was divided (cf. *Jub* 8.9-9.15; 10.27-36), the Tower of Babel was built (cf. *Jub* 10.19-26), and evil spirits began to have an influence on Noah's grandchildren (*Jub* 10.1-15). As a consequence of the collapse of the Tower, the knowledge of the Hebrew language was lost (*Jub* 12.25; cf. *Jub* 10.26). The antediluvian patriarchs Kenan and Jared are also omitted from the chain of tradition. This is possibly due to the fact that Kenan was associated with Cain, and Jared is associated with the Watchers, because in his days they came down to earth.

The *halakhic* instructions that are written in the books of the fathers are about several subjects. Enoch wrote down 'the signs of the sky in accord with the fixed pattern of their months so that mankind would know the seasons of the years according to the fixed patterns of each of their months' (*Jub* 4.17). He also taught the law of the first fruits (*Jub* 7.38-39; cf. *Jub* 7.35-37). Noah wrote down all the kinds of medicine which would preclude the evil spirits from pursuing Noah's children (*Jub* 10.12-14). When he was in the house of Potiphar, Joseph remembered Abraham's words 'that no one is to commit adultery with a woman who has a husband' (*Jub* 39.6). The purpose of linking the *halakhic* instructions to the chain of tradition was obviously to anchor those instructions that are important for the author of *Jubilees* in the time of the Patriarchs.<sup>50</sup> In fact the *halakhah* of *Jubilees* is immanent to the creation.<sup>51</sup> The *halakhah* written in the books of the Patriarchs is on various occasions said to be derived from the teachings of the angels. Enoch wrote down his testimony 'as we [the angels] had told him' (*Jub* 4.18). Noah wrote 'everything (just) as we [the angels] had taught him' (*Jub* 10.13; cf. *Jub* 10.10) in a book. It was the Angel of the Presence who taught Abraham Hebrew in order to enable him to study the books of his fathers (*Jub* 12.25-27). Joseph himself

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Halpern-Amaru, *Empowerment*, 21.

<sup>50</sup> K. Berger, *Das Buch der Jubiläen* (JSRZ 5.3), Gütersloh 1981, 279; S. Rosenkranz, 'Vom Paradies zum Tempel', in: S. Lauer and H. Ernst (eds), *Tempelkult und Tempelzerstörung (70 n. Chr.): Festschrift für Clemens Thoma zum 60. Geburtstag* (Judaica et Christiana 15), Bern 1995, 27-131, esp. 36; B. Ego, 'Heilige Zeit—heiliger Raum—heiliger Mensch: Beobachtungen zur Struktur der Gesetzesbegründung in der Schöpfungs- und Paradiesgeschichte des Jubiläenbuches', in: M. Albani, J. Frey, and A. Lange (eds), *Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (TSAJ 65), Tübingen 1997, 207-19, esp. 207.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Jub* 12.25-27, where Hebrew is called 'the language of the creation'. Müller, 'Hebräische Sprache', 165.



remembered that for committing adultery, heaven had ordained the death penalty (*Jub* 39.6). This means that the *halakhah* was ultimately anchored in the order of heaven.<sup>52</sup>

Moses is placed within the authoritative written tradition that began with Enoch before the flood and extended through the patriarchal period to Moses' time. All patriarchs contributed to this written tradition and they transmitted it to their favourite sons. The full law would be recorded in Moses' time.<sup>53</sup>

### 6. *Final remarks*

The comparison between *Jub* 47.1-9 and Exod 1.22-2.10 showed that the narrative structure runs more or less parallel in both versions. However, the structure of the marriage and birth report is not taken over. As far as the wording is concerned, the author of *Jubilees* sometimes reproduces the text of Exodus quite literally, but he also changes his model at other places. He omits certain phrases and passages, and he adds others, while he also modifies passages that run parallel. The author of *Jubilees* is a careful reader of the biblical text. This text poses some difficulties to him (e.g., blanks, inconsistencies). With his rewriting he tries to solve these problems. I point to the relocation of Exod 1.22, the omission of the marriage report, the naming of the characters, the stay of Amram in Canaan, and several of the variations in the report of the abandonment of Moses (Exod 2.3-10; cf. *Jub* 47.3-9). Sometimes the alterations in the rewriting are in line with biblical data (e.g., the naming of the characters). However, sometimes they are not, and in these cases the author of *Jubilees* is able to put his own bias in the text. I point not only to the periodization of history, but also to the omission of the marriage report, and Moses' education by his father.

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<sup>52</sup> This is, in fact, in line with the mention of the 'heavenly tablets' in *Jubilees* at other places (*Jub* 3.10; 4.5; 5.13-14; 6.31, 35; 16.3, 9; 19.9; 23.32; 24.33; 30.19-22; 31.32; 32.21-22). Several *halakhot* can be found on the heavenly tablets. For a study on the heavenly tablets see F. García Martínez, 'The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of *Jubilees*', in: Albani, Frey, and Lange, *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, 243-60.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. VanderKam, *Book of Jubilees*, 120.

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